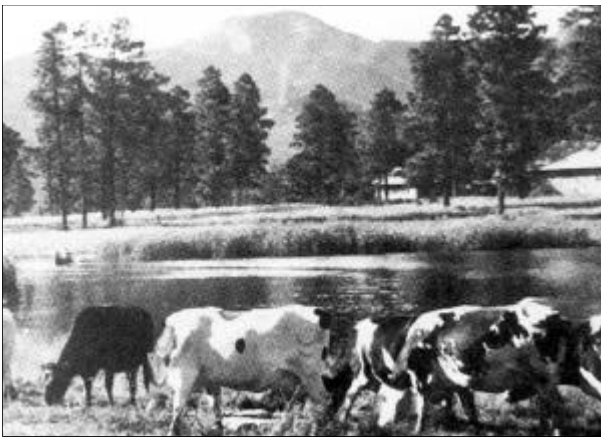


a.





b.



c.



d.



e.

- a. LOS ALAMOS NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS
- b. ASHLEY POND, EARLY 1920's
- c. FULLER LODGE, 1928
- d. MANHATTAN PROJECT BUILDINGS P AND T ON TRINITY DRIVE, MID 1940's
- e. LOS ALAMOS POST OFFICE, LATE 1940's

## E. APPENDIX

### 1. HISTORY

LOS ALAMOS' HISTORY AS A HUMAN SETTLEMENT BEGINS WITH THE SETTLEMENT OF THE Pajarito Plateau by Pueblo Indian tribes. The native people of New Mexico developed a definite presence on the land with buildings, artifacts and art reflecting a distinctive and industrious way of life. Despite the decline and disappearance of significant portions of their culture, their emphasis on a way of life based on a balance with nature and stewardship of the landscape remains inspiring and humbling at the same time.

Subsequent Spanish, Mexican and American ranchers on the Plateau generally adopted the seasonal patterns of presence that the Indians had practiced for centuries before them.

In 1917 a Detroit native named Ashley Pond established the Los Alamos Ranch School, creating the first permanent encampment on the Los Alamos Mesa. Offering an outdoor-orientated education for well-to-do boys, with graduation ceremonies on horse-back, the Ranch School community numbered fewer than 200 people. Its few buildings included a collection of houses that would eventually become known as "Bathtub Row." The centerpiece of the school's informal campus was Fuller Lodge, completed in 1928 to the designs of Santa Fe architect John Gaw Meem. The Ranch School located itself around a small puddle that the boys, unable to resist the joke, would name Ashley Pond. Today both the pond and the Ranch School's buildings are still the historic and cultural focus of Los Alamos.

During World War Two the US Government commandeered the school site and its buildings for the Manhattan Project's secret laboratories. Already isolated by geography, Los Alamos was hidden behind fences, gatehouses, and military police. The rapid pace of the Bomb project necessitated expedient construction of an instant city of Army barracks and Quonset huts. Scientists and their families arriving in Los Alamos found "a ramshackle town of temporary buildings scattered helter-skelter over the landscape, an Army post that looked more like a frontier mining camp." After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the secret town of Los Alamos became instantly famous, but its status remained undecided as the government deliberated the purpose of the National Laboratory.

Ultimately, the Cold War ensured that the Laboratory would continue to have a function and in the late 1949 Los Alamos gained legal status as city, although the gates would not be removed until 1957. The temporary structures of the Manhattan Project were slowly removed and replaced with new buildings reflective of the latest ideas then current in architectural design and urban planning. Just as post-war prosperity and federal programs encouraged suburban expansion elsewhere in America, suburban planning was the order of the day as Downtown Los Alamos was constructed. In fact, built in 1948 as Los Alamos Center, Central Park Square was one of the prototypes for regional suburban malls in the United States. However, suburban planning has since proven a poor substitute for town life. Its single-use zoning prevents the mix of activities necessary for a vital town center; its requirement for all buildings to provide ample parking discourages walking and encourages automobile use; and its financial development produces second-rate architecture designed to last little longer than the 10 or 20-year length of the developer's loan period.

Despite being a permanent city for nearly 50 years, much of Los Alamos' physical and urban form continues to be temporary in nature. However, Los Alamos can no longer sprawl across the mesas and into the forests. It is reaching the limits of the Santa Fe National Forest and the National Laboratory. Building within the forest diminishes the Los Alamos' scenic environment and presents an ecological risk to the communities there, as the recent Cerro Grande fire has demonstrated. Its isolated geography and lack of conveniently located housing and businesses produces traffic congestion characteristic of much larger cities. However, the linear arrangement of Los Alamos' mesas and neighborhoods suggests that they might some day be connected with transit. As the opposite diagram illustrates, the city's geography is a series of "finger-like" mesas, each approximately a half-mile across. Each mesa also contains a series of small compact neighborhoods, centered within a five-minute walking radius of a public location, such as school or park. Energizing Downtown Los Alamos will create a focus for these neighborhoods, removing the pressures of sprawl on the forests and providing the critical mass of activity necessary re-establish a vital town center and pedestrian Main Street.